Rules of the Game
All About Mounts (Part Four)
By Skip Williams

Last week we looked at standard actions from Table 8-2 in the *Player's Handbook* and considered which of these actions you can perform while your mount moves. This week, we'll consider the rest of the actions shown on Table 8-2.

Move Actions

It might seem odd, but you can use several kinds of move actions while your mount moves.

Move: This is one move action you can't use while mounted -- your mount does the moving for you.

Control a Frightened Mount: You must use this action to direct the actions of a mount that isn't naturally aggressive and has not been trained for combat riding (see Unruly Mounts in Battle in Part Two). If you succeed and direct your mount to move, your move action is part of the mount's movement for the turn.

Direct or Redirect an Active Spell: Your mount's movement doesn't affect your ability to direct or redirect a spell. If your mount makes a single move, you can direct or redirect the spell before or after the mount moves. If your mount runs or makes a double move, you direct or redirect the spell when your mount has completed half its movement for the turn.

Draw a Weapon: You can draw a weapon while your mount moves. (If you have a base attack bonus of +1 or higher, you also can draw a weapon while you move on your own.) If your mount makes more than a single move, you can draw the weapon during either the first or the second half of your mount's movement for the turn.

Load a Hand or Light Crossbow: You can load a hand or light crossbow while your mount moves. If your mount makes more than a single move, you can draw the weapon during either the first or the second half of your mount's movement for the turn.

Open or Close a Door: It's possible to work a door when mounted, but not while the mount moves. If your mount makes more than a single move during a turn, you don't have time left to open or close the door.

Mount or Dismount: You can't combine this action with your mount's movement, but you can mount or dismount during a turn when the mount moves (see Part One for details).

Move a Heavy Object: Moving something really heavy usually isn't possible while mounted unless you use the mount to do the moving. (Most mounts can either push the object or pull it with the aid of some kind of harness.) Moving an object this way usually is a fairly involved operation and directing the mount is a move action you use as part of the move action the mount uses to shift the object.

Pick Up an Item: You can pick up an item while your mount moves, but it's usually tough to grab something off the ground when you're sitting atop a mount. As an optional rule, you might want to require a DC 15 Ride check (armor check penalty applies) to swing down and grab an item off the ground without dismounting. The DC increases to 20 if the mount makes a double move and to 25 if the mount runs. You can pick up an item at any point during the mount's movement.

Sheathe a Weapon: You can sheathe a weapon while your mount moves. If your mount makes more than a single move, you can sheathe a weapon during either the first or the second half of the mount's movement during the turn.

Stand Up from Prone: You usually cannot be both prone and mounted. If you are, you can get up while the mount moves. If your mount makes more than a single move, you can get up either the first or the second half of the mount's movement during the turn.

Ready or Loose a Shield: You can ready or loose a shield while your mount moves. (If you have a base attack bonus of +1 or higher, you also can ready or loose a shield while you move on your own.) If your mount makes more than a single move, you can ready or loose a shield during either the first or the second half of your mount's movement for the turn.

Retrieve a Stored Item: You can retrieve a stored item while your mount moves. If your mount makes more than a single move, you can retrieve a stored item during either the first or the second half of your mount's movement for the turn.

Full-Round Actions

As with standard actions, you can sometimes perform a full-round action while your mount moves. Other times, your mount's movement interferes with the full-round action, especially when you have to be someplace in particular to perform the action. If a full-round action is shown on Table 8-2 but not included here, you can perform it from a moving mount. You complete the action after the mount completes its movement for the turn. Some full-round actions require some additional notes:

Full Melee Attack: A moving mount usually keeps you from using the full attack action for melee attacks because you spend part of your turn just moving along with your mount. You can make a full melee attack while mounted, however, if your mount moves no more than 5 feet during the turn. The rules don't say so, but common sense dictates that 5 feet of movement in this case constitutes a 5-foot step. If your mount uses the minimum movement rule to move 5 feet though (see page 149 in the *Player's Handbook*), the best you can manage on the same round is a single melee attack.

Full Ranged Attack: You can make a full ranged attack from your moving mount. If your mount makes a single move, you make all your ranged attacks either before or after the movement, and the rules assume your mount is stationary when you shoot. If your mount makes a double move, you can still make a full ranged attack, but you're shooting while the mount is moving and you take a -4 penalty on your attack roll. If your mount runs, you take a -8 penalty on ranged attacks. In either case, you make all your attack rolls when your mount has completed half its movement for the turn.

Charge: Performing a mounted charge works just like performing a charge on foot. You use your mount's speed

rating. Remember that no creature can charge through an obstacle, another creature, or terrain that hampers movement. Due to its larger size, your mount might be unable to charge in a location where you could if on foot (see page 148 in the *Player's Handbook*).

If you're armed with a lance, you deal double damage when you perform a mounted charge.

Deliver Coup de Grace: You can deliver a coup de grace from a moving mount only when your mount moves 5 feet or less during the current turn.

Escape From a Net: If you happen to find yourself caught in a net and your mount is not, you can attempt to escape from it while your mount moves. Resolve the attempt after the mount completes its movement.

Use a Skill That Takes 1 Round: Using a skill that requires you to touch or handle something while mounted (such as Disable Device or Open Lock) is subject to the same limitations that apply to mounted melee attacks. Whatever you touch or handle must be within reach when you use the skill. If you can carry whatever you're touching or handling as part of your skill along with you as your mount moves, your mount's movement doesn't affect the skill use (though the DM might chose to impose a check penalty or DC increase).

A skill that works at a distance (such as Search or Survival) usually isn't affected by your mount's movement (though the DM might choose to impose a check penalty or DC increase. If your mount makes a single move, you can make your skill check before or after the mount moves). If your mount runs or makes a double move, you use your skill check when your mount has completed half its movement for the turn.

Use a Touch Spell on Up to Six Friends: You can deliver a touch spell while your mount moves. You can use your mount's speed to move from friend to friend. If you cast the spell with a casting time of one action during the same round you deliver it, the spell isn't completed until your mount completes half its movement for the turn.

Withdraw: You can withdraw while mounted. Use your mount's speed rating. The first square you and your mount leave is not considered threatened and neither you nor your mount provoke attacks of opportunity when you leave that square.

What's Next?

That's all our time for this week. Next week, we'll wrap up the series with a few miscellaneous notes.

About the Author

Skip Williams keeps busy with freelance projects for several different game companies and was the Sage of *Dragon Magazine* for many years. Skip is a co-designer of the **D&D** 3rd Edition game and the chief architect of the *Monster Manual*. When not devising swift and cruel deaths for player characters, Skip putters in his kitchen or garden (rabbits and deer are not Skip's friends) or works on repairing and improving the century-old farmhouse that he shares with his wife, Penny, and a growing menagerie of pets.

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